IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF FOLLOWERSHIP BEHAVIOUR ON JOB SATISFACTION & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANY

SYNOPSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the union of leaders, followers, and situations. Over the years, leadership studies have tended to emphasize the thoughts, actions, and personas of leaders over those of followers. In addition, leadership situations have tended to be defined from the perspectives of leaders and not of followers. Further, decades of leadership research have produced a wide variety of leadership theories and models, in addition to hundreds of books about leaders and leadership. This plethora of leadership theories, research, processes, models and books suggests that there is no general agreement that one particular leadership theory or process may be effective for all organizations in every situation. Among the many definitions of leadership, one of the most popular definitions considers leadership to be a process which includes at least two individuals – the leader and the follower. Yet, leadership research has too often neglected the follower, choosing instead to pursue what Meindl referred to as *The Romance of Leadership*. The romance of leadership notion refers to the prominence of leaders and leadership in the way organizational actors and observers address organizational issues and problems, revealing a potential 'bias' "or "false assumption making'' regarding the relative importance of leadership factors to the functioning of groups and organizations. In essence, leadership is very much in the eye of beholder: followers, not the leaders.

From this perspective, the idea that leadership cannot and does not occur without followers is taken literally to be true. Jordan suggested that the execution and goal achievement is primarily dependent upon the follower in the leader/follower relationship. Kellerman has argued that the erroneous attribution of all outcomes to leaders yields a mistaken belief that leader's matter, while followers do not. Moreover, Kelley reported that leaders, on average, contribute 20 percent of an organization's success, whereas followers, on average, contribute 80 percent of an organization's success. Although followers contribute a larger percent to an organization's success, the term "follower" is typically perceived under a negative connotation. Followership has elicited such concepts as docility, conformity, and weakness, wherein the general use of the term "follower" implies these negative constructs. The image of a follower being weak impacts the interdependent relationship between the leader and his/her group wherein followers may reject their identified role. Although followers have a significant impact on the success of

an organization, a cursory search through Google scholar throws only 24 thousand results for followership whereas it gives 4.39 million results for leadership. Similarly, Google search gives 2.55 billion results for leadership but just 1.2 million for followership. Followership has only recently emerged as a significant topic of research, and that has been in last 35 years. Current literature on the tenets of followership primarily emphasizes observations and theory; wherein empirical studies are few.

Followership, often described as the ability of individuals to competently and proactively follow the instructions and support the efforts of their superior to achieve organizational goals, has remained an undervalued and underappreciated concept among both management development practitioners and researchers. The lack of research and appreciation of followership relative to leadership can be attributed to four interrelated factors. ***First****, the term followership is generally associated with negative and unflattering words such as passive, low status, unimaginative, and inability to make independent judgment. Followership is seldom presented as an important character trait for any person who aspires to lead others.* ***Second,*** *the traditional hierarchical relationship between leaders and their followers in bureaucratic organizations has started the interactive effects of leadership followership on organizational growth, stability, and survival. The predominant view of leadership behavior in the stereotypical leader follower exchange relationship is one in which leaders provide direction, support, and reinforcement and followers simply follow through on specified or expected levels of performance.* ***Third****, professional development programs pay less attention to developing effective follower cultures and skills because of the erroneous assumption that people know instinctively how to follow*. This view may explain why professional development programs have been slow in advocating for a shift in organizational culture to one that promotes effective followership and advocates for culture in which individuals can seamlessly transition to effective leadership while simultaneously fulfilling their followership roles in support of their superiors. Finally, academic business programs and professional development programs have not been proactive in documenting how characteristics and traits of effective followers are different from those exhibited by ineffective followers.

Emerging literature on leadership-followership suggest that effective followers and effective leaders share many of the same characteristics and that cultivating followership skills is a prerequisite for effective leadership. Employees have to simultaneously play the roles of followers and leaders because of the nature of bureaucratic or hierarchical model of organizations. In bureaucratic or hierarchical organizations, superiors and subordinates spend a great deal of their work hours following established procedures for implementing or evaluating policies developed by others. Failure to recognize followers as a complement of leadership may undermine organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Effective followership is viewed as both an art and science just as effective leadership is an art and science requiring skill and knowledge. Some authors argued that a balance approach to the study of leaders is necessary to understand and appreciate the contribution of followers to leadership and organizational effectiveness. Followership encompasses important character traits for any person who aspires to lead others. Effective followers are cooperative and collaborative, honest, enthusiastic, innovative, independent, credible, and intelligent. There are individuals with excellent attributes of followers who may not be good leaders or even desire to be in position of leadership, but it would be difficult to find a good leader who is not also a good follower.

Huwitz in their thought-provoking book, point out research from Indiana University by Philip Podsakoff and Scott McKenzie, which examined the impact of followership behaviors on performance across a variety of teams and industries such as insurance agency sales units, paper mill works crews, pharmaceutical sales teams, and restaurant staff. In every case they found that positive followership behaviors significantly impacted every performance metric measured, including decrease in customer complaints. This suggests considerable and untapped organizational potential given the lack of attention the followership has received to date. It has been further reported by the authors that followership is linked to improvement of 17% to 43% on many key performance metrics such as sales, production, quality, revenue per employee, and customer satisfaction.

Shamir argues, "...While ultimately our approach to the study of leadership should be neither leader- centered nor follower centered, at this stage, *the study of*

*leadership would benefit from more follower-centered perspectiv*e. It is important to examine not only how followers contribute to the construction of a leadership relationship but also how they empower the leader and influence his or her behavior and what is their contribution to determining the consequences of the leadership relationship".

While the tenets of followership are minimal in research, the importance of interdependence between leaders and followers suggest more emphasis should be placed on the research of followership and its connection to leadership.

Defining Followers and Followership

The definition of followership has evolved over the years. Hollander and Webb provided an early definition of followership; they defined followership as 'the extent to which an individual is desired by potential leaders of a group functioning within a circumscribed institutional context.' Another definition by Townsend also conceives the concept of followership in relation to the leader's perspective: "Followership can be defined as a process in which subordinates recognize their responsibility to comply with the orders of leaders and take appropriate action consistent with the situation to carry out those orders to the best their ability. In the absence of orders, they estimate the proper action to contribute to mission perform ace take that action. "Similarly, Bjugstad et al. also take a leader centric view in stating: "Followership may be defined as the ability to effectively follow the directives and support the efforts of a leader to maximize a structured organization". Katz and Kahn first introduced the concept of followership in modern literature when they defined followership as a role, whether formal or informal that existed under the context of direction from a leader.

Kelley expanded upon Katz and Kahn's work to define followership as a pursuit of a shared purpose through participation. Further, Kelley chose to define leadership and followership in distinctive ways:

"People who are effective in the follower role have the vision to see both the forest and the trees, the social capacity to work well with others, the strength of character to flourish without heroic status, the moral and psychological balance to pursue personal and corporate goals at no cost to others, and above all, the desire to

participate in a team effort for the accomplishment of some greater common purpose."

Chaleff continued with Kelley's definition and has defined followership as an exchange of influence between people that shared a common purpose. On the other hand, Kellerman describes 'followers' in relation to hierarchy, as 'subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line'. Many of the definitions cited above assume that roles are inherently related to hierarchical status. This perspective has been challenged by Stech and he argued that leadership/followership represents an influential process, irrespective of rank and state. Ros argues that if leaders and collaborators do leadership, there is no need for the separate process of followership. Further, he argues that if leadership is a relationship, leaders and followers both do leadership.

Uhl-Bien, M. et al., identifies followership through two lenses: followership as a rank or position (i.e. role) and followership as a social process. The first, a role theory approach, sees followership as a role played by individuals occupying a formal or informal position or rank (e.g., a "subordinate "in hierarchical "manager-subordinate relationship; a follower in a leader-follower relationship. The second, a constructionist approach, views followership as a relational interaction through which leadership is co-created in combined acts of leading and following. Whereas role-based views investigate followership as a role and a set of behaviors or behavioral styles of individuals or groups, constructionist views study followership as a social process necessarily intertwined with leadership. In contrast to leader-centric approaches examining how leaders influence follower attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes, role-based followership approaches consider how followers influence leader attitudes, behaviors and outcomes. This approach identifies followers as the causal agents i.e., Follower characteristics and behaviors are the independent variables, and leader characteristics and behaviors are the dependent or moderator variables.

The notion of followership/leadership as a process is intrinsic to Agho's (2009) argument that only after becoming an effective follower could one become an

effective leader- suggesting that followership is an experiential requirement of leadership.

In sum, followership and leadership are often perceived as highly similar or having symbiotic relationship. Followership may be defined as a process whereby an individual or individuals accept the influence of others to accomplish a common goal. And Leadership can be viewed as a shared process.

For the purpose of our study, focused on followership in hierarchical set up of large corporation; role-based view of followership is more suitable and shall be used for this study.

Follower Characteristics and Styles (Typologies)

The earliest role-based views are provided in typologies that identify follower characteristics and styles. The first such typology was provided by Zaleski. Zaleski distinguished among followers by placing them along two axes: dominance and submission, and activity and passivity. Accordingly, he divided them into four groups: impulsive subordinates, compulsive subordinates, masochistic subordinates, and withdrawn subordinates. This typology of subordinates/followers is introduced both as a means of helping leaders better understand how to deal with followers, but also as providing direction to followers who aspire to positions of leadership. As Zalznkik and Kets de Vries state, "The person who aspires to leadership must negotiate the risky passage between dependency and assertiveness".

According to Kelley, effective followers are individuals who are enthusiastic, intelligent, ambitious, and self-reliant. Kelley identified two underlying behavioral dimensions that distinguish types of followers. The first behavioral dimension is the degree to which the individual is an independent, critical thinker. The second dimension is the degree to which the individual is active or passive. Depending on where a person falls on these two dimensions, there are five different follower types:

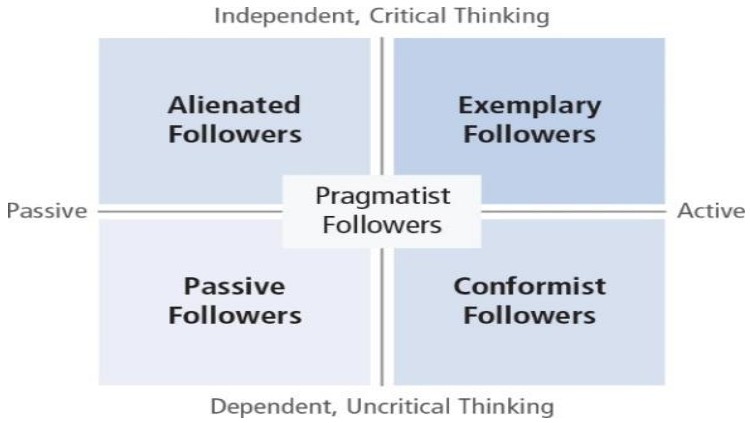

Figure 1: Kelley's Typology of Followers

- The Passive Followers/ Sheep (low independence, passive): These individuals require external motivation and constant supervision.

- The Conformist Followers/Yes-People (low independence, active): These conformists are committed to the leader and the goal (or task) of the organization (or group/team) and will defend adamantly their leader when faced with opposition from others. They do not question the decisions or actions of the leader.
- The Pragmatists Followers (average on both dimensions): These individuals are not trail-blazers; they will not stand behind controversial or unique ideas until the majority of the group has expressed their support and often prefer to stay in the background.
- The Alienated Followers (high independence, passive): These individuals are negative and often attempt to stall or bring the group down by constantly questioning the decisions and actions of the leader.
- The Exemplary Followers/Star Followers (high independence, active): These exemplary followers are positive, active, and independent thinkers. Star followers will not blindly accept the decisions or actions of a leader until they have evaluated them completely but can be trusted to get the job done.

Kelley advocated turning all followers into ‘’exemplary followers’, arguing that the best followers are anything but passive sheep- they are actively engaged and exhibit courageous conscience.

Chaleff Typology (1995, 2008)

In 1995, Ira Chaleff published a practitioner book called the courageous Follower. His premise was that the key to effective leadership is effective followership, which occurs when followers “vigorously support” leaders in pursuing the mission and vision of the organization. Effective followership requires followers who are accountable and willing to “stand up to and for leaders”. He calls this courageous because followers at times will have to challenge and confront leaders with unpleasant information and critical and host feedback. Effective followers are partners with leaders who contribute to satisfying and productive work environments by being accountable and taking a proactive approach to their roles.

Chaleff introduced the courageous follower model of attitudes and behaviors with five dimensions: four dimensions in which courageous followers operates within a group, and a fifth dimension in which the follower operates either within or outside

the group depending on the response of the leadership. The dimensions of courageous followership are:

- **Assume responsibility**: They assume responsibility for themselves and the organization. They do not expect the leader or organization to provide for their security and growth, or need permission to act. Courageous followers discover and create opportunities to fulfill their potential and maximize their value to the organization.
- **To serve**: Courageous followers are unafraid of the hard work required to serve a leader. They assume new or additional responsibilities, stay alert for areas in which their strengths complement the leaders, and assert themselves in these areas. They are as passionate as the leader in pursuing the common purpose.
- **To challenge**: Courageous followers give voice to the discomfort they feel when the behaviors or policies of the leader or group conflict with their sense of what is right. They are willing to stand up, to stand out, to risk rejection, to initiate conflict in order to examine the actions of the leader and group when appropriate. They are willing to deal with the emotions their challenge evokes in the leader and group. Courageous followers value organizational harmony and their relationship with the leader, but not at the cost of the common purpose and their integrity.
- **To participate in transformation**: Courageous followers champion the need for change and stay with the leader and group while they mutually struggle with the difficulty of real change. They examine their own need for transformation and become full participants in the change process as appropriate.
- **To take moral action**: Courageous followers know when it is time to take a stand that is different than that of the leader's The stand may involve refusing to obey a direct order, appealing the order to the next level of authority, or tendering one's resignation. These and other forms of moral action involve personal risk, but service to the common purpose justifies and sometimes demands acting. If attempts to redress the morally objectionable situation fail, a follower faces the more difficult prospect of whether to become a whistleblower.

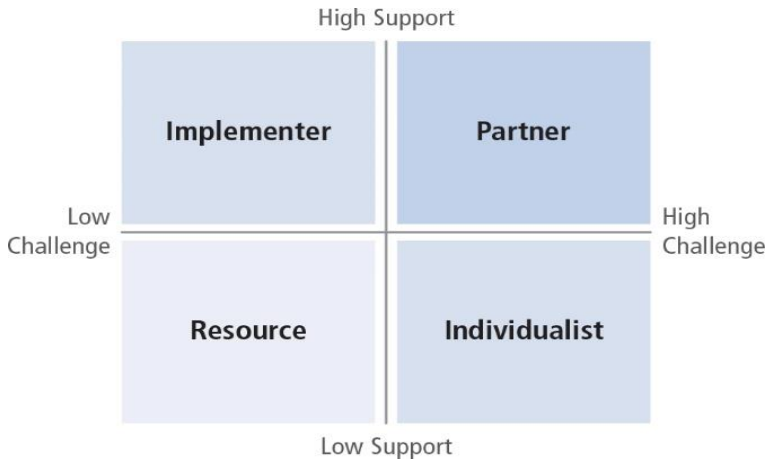

Figure 2: Chaleff's Typology of Followers

Further, based on matrix of two characteristics viz supporting the leader when leader is right and challenging the leader when leader is wrong, Chaleff identifies four different follower styles: Implementer, Partner, Individualist, and resource.

1. Resource (low support, low challenge): Will do enough to retain position but no more.
2. Individualist (low support, high challenge): Will speak up when others are silent, but voice is marginalized, as it is too chronically contrarian.
3. Implementer (high support, low challenge): Leader values this style but is at risk because follower will not caution against costly mistakes.
4. Partner (high support, high challenge): Assumes full responsibility for own and leader's behavior and acts accordingly.

Kellerman Typology (2008)

Barbara Kellerman divides followers in five categories based on their level of engagement in the leadership process.

- **Isolates**: Isolates are completely detached. They do not care about their leaders, know anything about them, or respond to them in any way. Their alienation is, nevertheless, of consequence.
- **Bystanders**: Bystanders observe but do not participate. They make a deliberate decision to stand aside, to disengage from their leaders and from whatever is the group dynamic.

- **Participants**: Participants are engaged in some way. They either clearly favor or oppose their leaders, groups, and organizations of which they are members. In either case, they invest resources to try and make an impact.
- **Activists**: Activists feel strongly about their leaders and act accordingly. They are eager, energetic, and engaged. Because they are heavily invested in people and processes, they work hard either on behalf of their leaders or to undermine and even unseat them.
- **Diehards**: Diehards are, as their name implies, prepared to die if necessary for their cause, whether it is an individual, an idea, or both. Diehards are deeply devoted to their leaders; or, in contrast, they are ready to remove them from positions of power, authority, and influence by any means necessary. In either case, Diehards are defined by their dedication including their willingness to risk life and limb. Being a Diehard is all-consuming.

She uses this framework to argue that followers have more power and influence than they are traditionally accredited. Her interest is in focusing on how engaged followers can act as agents of change.

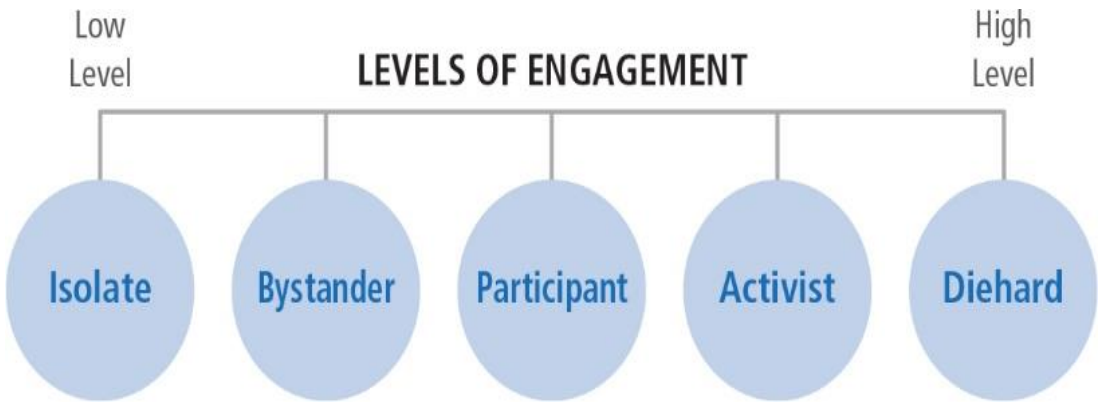

Figure 3: Kellerman's Typology of Followers

As follower behaviors are relational to leader behaviors, there will be some variations in the employee's follower style depending on the leadership style of the hierarchy in which they currently work. Itis this core style that employee need to identify so that he can begin to understand the consequences of that style and make choices about reinforcing or changing it.

Review of Literature

While the subject of leadership has long been a fundamental topic, much of research associated with the topic has focused on performance, skills, traits, cultural contexts and situational contexts. Yet, very litter research has been done to determine how much of leadership performance is dependent upon those with whom he or she works. Similarly, management researchers need to ponder over whether the performance of organization is truly outcome of good leadership or good followership. Further, leadership as a field of study has been emphasized so heavily that the role of follower has nearly been forgotten or simply ignored in the pursuit to develop leadership related principles. Even latest management theory such as *Leader Member Exchange Model* claim to considers the role of the follower only in terms of its relations with the leader. There is little research that closely examines the role of the follower and the essential traits and qualities that define this role within an organizational setting. Paradoxically, typical hierarchical organizations find that much of the work is completed by followers and not by leaders. Yet, followership as a management concept has not received its due attention in management theory and practice. However, followership, its theory and evolution, its types has always been a concern for many researchers although in minority.

Kellerman (2008) argued that thinking about leadership is absolutely not possible without taking into consideration the followership. She discussed the web of leadership as equilateral triangle consisting of leaders, the contexts in which leader is embedded and followers. She outlined five different types of followers on unidirectional scale on the basis of level of engagement. She defined followership as a relationship (rank) between superiors and subordinates, and a (response) behavior of the former to the latter. Kellerman has interpreted followers from the perspective of political science rather than organizational psychology.

Kellerman (2012) drew interesting parallel between relationship of husband and wife and leader and follower. She observed that there is a single striking similarity i.e., pattern of dominance and deference between men or women. It was presumed until only recently that husbands would dominate while wives would defer. Along similar lines, between leaders and followers, it was presumed until only recently

that leaders should dominate and followers defer. She identified that change in culture and technology is the main factors in decline of power and influence of leadership in 21st century. The fact that followers know everything or can know everything has leveling effect. She discusses how Face book, Twitter and other social media have impacted equation/balance between leadership and followership on both business and politics.

Kellerman (2016) argued that the leadership industry has been beset by the bias. The bias has been directed towards leaders and away from two other critical variables. The first is followers, and second is contexts, within which leaders and followers are embedded. She argues that although leadership industry has grown to more than 50-billion-dollar size in last 40 years, has not in any major measurable way improved the human condition. In the 21st century, changes in culture and technology have added to follower power and subtracted from leader power. She argues that the history of leadership cannot be understood apart from the history of followers. They are intertwined.

Zaleznick (1965) in his discussions concerning leadership dilemmas, presented a rather pessimistic view of subordinates (followers) and distinguishes among followers by placing them along two axis: dominance and submission, and activity and passivity. Accordingly, he divided them into four groups: impulsive subordinates (followers who are high in control and activity), compulsive subordinates (followers who are high in control and passivity), masochistic subordinates (followers who are high in submission and activity), and withdrawn subordinates (followers who are high in submission and passivity). Perhaps this was the first discussion on followership in modern management literature. This typology of subordinates/followers is introduced both as a means of helping leaders better understand how to deal with followers, but also as providing direction to followers who aspire to positions of leadership.

Kelly (1992) is widely accepted as founder of modern conception of followership. Kelley argued that most people spend most of the time in follower roles, yet are rarely mentioned or acknowledged for their work. In his seminal book, he presented two broad dimensions i.e., independent, critical thinking versus dependent and uncritical thinking of followership. According to Kelley, there are

five basic styles of followership viz. Yes People, Alienated people, pragmatists, passive followers and exemplary followers. Kelley concludes that exemplary followership is the gold standard among the five types. Author urges organizations to identify followership styles and put efforts to move more followers towards exemplary follower.

Bjugstad et al., (2006) reviewed and categorized the literature on followership into three broad theoretical areas. First, literature relating to follower motivations, second follower values and trust & third the characteristics of effective & ineffective followers. Authors argued that there is misconception that leadership is more important than followership. Further, authors proposed integrated model of leadership and followership styles. They have proposed integrated hybrid model on leadership and followership for improving organizational performance.

Baker (2007) reviews proved to be a key benchmark in that it was the first journal article totally dedicated to a review of followership literature. It has made following key observations. First, followership and leadership pertain to roles. Second, followers are active rather than passive. Third, followers and leaders share a common purpose and fourth, the relational dynamics between followers and leaders is significant.

Crossman et al., (2011) reviewed the literature on followership and have categorized it into three categories. The first category is descriptive, giving actual behaviors exhibited by followers which can be active or passive, disregarding, supporting or in opposition to their leaders. The second category is prescriptive. In the second category literature, the scholars have concentrated on idealized behavior that relate to behavior followers should exhibit rather than those they necessarily practice. The third category relates to smaller body of literature that analyses situational factors of followership in terms of how compatible particular leadership and followership styles are.

Uhl-Bien, M. et al., (2013) argues that as per accepted wisdom there is no leadership without followers yet followers are very often left out of the leadership research equation. After comprehensive review they divide leadership - followership theories into two categories as:

- Leadership and followership as set roles,
- Leadership and followership as a social construction

Role-based followership approaches consider how followers influence leader's attitude, behavior, and outcomes. These approaches identify followers as the causal agents-i.e., follower characteristics and behaviors are the independent variables, and leader follower characteristics and behaviors are the dependent or moderator variables. The focus in these approaches is on the follower characteristics and style, followership role orientations, implicit theories of followership, follower identities, and how follower identities and behaviors shape leader attitude, behavior and effectiveness. Constructionist approaches see followership and leadership as co-constructed in social and relational interactions between people. Followership is seen in following behaviors that can include leader and follower claiming and granting, deferring or obeying, registering and negotiating with another`s wishes or influence attempts. In this way followership is not tied to a role but to behavior. This approach allows us to recognize that managers are not always leading but they also defer to subordinates, which means they also engage in following behaviors.

Nocolas Bastardoz (2018) analyzed followership from an evolutionary perspective. Using the insights from evolutionary, psychological, biological sciences; authors argue that humans have an adaptive followership psychology that enables them to swiftly co-ordinate their actions with other individuals. Humans have a flexible followership psychology that enables them to select and follow the right kind of leaders under the right conditions, determine an appropriate engagement level, and switch from being a follower to a leader whenever appropriate. They concluded that followership is arguably the default setting in our brain and on any occasion, we are much more likely to be followers than leaders. As fewer leaders are needed than followers, there has probably been cultural selection on followership traits, favoring more conformists, docile and passive individuals.

Agho (2009) on the basis of cross-sectional empirical study in different types of organizations (both government and non-government), reported that Senior Managers from profit/ not for profit and Government organizations perceived the

five most important characteristics of leaders to be Honesty/ Integrity, Competent, Forward-looking, Inspiring and Intelligent. In comparison, they have rated Honesty/Integrity, Competent, Dependable, Loyal and Supportive as the five most important characteristics of effective followers. Although, the findings of this study did not suggest that the characteristics of effective leaders and followers are identical, the perception of the senior level executives included in this study is that effective followers play significant roles in fostering leadership and organizational effectiveness. Author has concluded that followership skills should be viewed as prerequisite for effective leadership and that leadership and followership are interrelated roles.

Walia (2019) did empirical study on the relationship between followership style and performance in service sector in India. Author has collected responses from 188 randomly selected middle management respondents from a bank and export house in Delhi area of India. As per this study, the majority of mid management who participated in this study indicated conformist followership style. Alienated and exemplary followership styles were two followership styles which were not related to performance, indicating the low performance of mid-management. Surprisingly the study reveals that respondent who indicated exemplary followership style had shown low performance.

Myung Jin. et al., (2016) tried to understand the role of follower`s behavior on employee job satisfaction as well as conditions that can moderate its impact. The study focuses on the effect of interaction among active followership and two situational factors which supervisors support and performance-oriented culture on employee job satisfaction. Study demonstrates that active followership has significant positive influence on job satisfaction. Further, findings show that employees highly engaged in their work expressed stronger job satisfaction when the perceptions of performance orientation of their organization were low, rather than high.

Avolio (2008) argued that the shift in the way in which leadership has been defined from the earliest models of leadership to the theory of *Authentic Leadership Development* (ALD) has pushed leadership away from being viewed as a compilation of traits and behaviors to a dynamic interaction through which leaders

and followers create leadership and ultimately its development. Further, Avolio argues that followers who assume ownership for their development would challenge their leader to make their own development a priority. To motivate their leaders to do so, followers would have to be willing to make them-selves vulnerable by challenging the leader when the leader doesn't live up to the followers' expectations for being developed.

Jamesh Maroosis (2008) argued that followership, like leadership is discipline of competencies and response-abilities. The difference between response able and responsible is the difference between something you can do and something you should do. Response-ability is readiness. Responsibility is abstract duty or job description. Leadership and followership are competencies that work in tandem as a shared discipline of reciprocal response- abilities. Author argues that followership is essentially a learning function. The leader teaches what followers need to learn and understand. The leader helps the follower`s to see and achieve their shared goals.

Howell (2008) focused on different roles followers play in organizations. Followers may work closely or at a distance from their leader, with varying amounts of interaction and independence in determining their own actions. Further, he argued that these perspectives also clarify why some followers face trouble adjusting to new leaders and may help followers prepare for their role's vis a vis specific leader. Furthers, author proposes three paradigms as given below:

a) **Leader follower paradigm:** It assumes leader as an as an individual exemplary Hero/warrior/ great person. The archetypal warrior's relationships with others involve shaping followers to satisfy the personal needs of the leader. The follower is someone who can be formed and sculpted.

b) **Leadership followership organizational position paradigm:** This paradigm is very important for this thesis focusing on role-based followership in Public Sector Corporation. Fundamental to the leader follower position paradigm is the concept of the formal, hierarchical, and bureaucratic organization that has division of labour, multiple levels of management, and written policies and procedures. The hierarchy is represented in clear cut organization chart, and the

bureaucracy can be seen in written documents, such as manuals and handbooks. Within the hierarchy, every manager has the authority to operate within his or her own unit but must report someone to the next level above. The result is a series of superior subordinate relationships. However, it is common practice to refer to the superior as a leader and the subordinate as a follower. The assumption with regard to followers or subordinates is that they somehow lack the experience, education, skills, seniority, and training to act effectively on their own initiative. Followers must be led; that is, they must be directed, supervised, control, and motivated in order to get them to accomplish their tasks. The limitation in this paradigm is that anyone operating from a position of authority in a hierarchy is also subordinate therefore subject to the authority of someone at a higher level.

Every leader is also a follower. All the thousands of middle managers are indeed in the middle, leading subordinates but subject to the direction and whims of those above

c) **The leadership – followership state paradigm:** The basic assumption in this paradigm is that expertise is diverse and distributed among the members of an organization, work group or team. Persons in position of authority must be willing to assume the condition of followership while subordinate operates in the state of leadership.

Rost (2008) argued that if you treat leadership as a relationship, leaders and followers both do leadership. The word 'followers' is in consistent with the post-industrial understanding of leadership. The word followers are a very industrial term connoting subordination, submissiveness, passivity, lacking responsible judgment, and willingness to allow others to control their lives and activities. In the 21st century, followers are expected to be active, intelligent, influential, responsible and involved. Therefore, the word followers` will never work in the postindustrial view of leadership because it comes with too much baggage, most of which contradicts the idea of collaboration in any meaningful sense. Finally, author suggests that 'followers' words should be replaced with collaborators or participants or contributors or something neutral such as members or associates to reflect the current reality.

Kalkhoran et al., (2013) observed a significant difference between various types of followers in terms of their job satisfaction, organizational affective commitment, and job involvement. Further they state that exemplary follower has higher level of job outcomes. The surprisingly finding of their study is that pragmatist followers have no meaningful difference with conformist and passive ones in their job satisfaction and job involvement. Finally, they argue that views of the both managers & employees in an organization show change from emphasizing only on leadership ability to and integrated view of leaders and follower's abilities. They recommend that followership styles of the employees should be considered in the process of selection, employment and development.

Uhl-Been& Carsten (2018) carry forwarded the call to "reverse the lens" in leadership by Shamir (2007) which triggered the emergence of followership theory as a new field of study in leadership research. They argue for a balanced view in leadership by showing how followership theory adds new perspectives on the ways in which we can study leadership as a dynamic, fluid, relational process. Further, they present alternative views (e.g., position, role, identity, constructionist, and co-creation) and approach leadership study from a range of paradigmatic perspectives that allow us to more fully capture the behaviors, interactions, relational dynamics and processes through which leadership and followership are created and constructed.

Kim Schachter (2013) examined the influence of followership on organizational performance in a public sector setting in USA through empirical research. They have assigned organizational performance as dependable variable and followership style of independent variable. It is a huge empirical study having random sample of 417128 employees. This study provides public managers with evidence that demonstrates that the encouragement of effective followership is important in public organizations. The changing role of followers as partners allows employees to exercise increased decision-making power and autonomy. The study helps public mangers gain a better understanding of the growing importance of their follower's roles in an ever-changing public context.

Christianah O. Oyetunji (2013) described the followership style and job performance in Botswana private Universities. Author has attempted to determine

if there is a significant relationship between followership styles in relation to job performance. Following are the findings of the study:

- Followership styles include passive, alienated, pragmatist and exemplary followership styles. The most common followership style among the lecturers is pragmatist followership style.
- There is no relationship between exemplary, pragmatist and alienated followership styles and job performance; indicating low performance of lecturers who indicated these styles.
- There is a high relationship between passive followership style and job performance; indicating high performance of lecturers who indicated this style of followership.

Finding of this study, that lecturers who were passive followers were high performers, is surprising and contrary to the Kelley's prescription that most effective followership style is exemplary followership. Further, findings of this study suggest that exemplary followership style was unrelated to job performance rather exemplary lecturers' job performance was very low.

Gatti P, et al., (2017) investigated two followership behavior, followers' active engagement and followers` independent critical thinking, and their relationship with job satisfaction in a sample of nurses in Italy. Paper and pencil questionnaire was administered to 425 nurses in an Italian hospital. Finding of the study suggest that follower active engagement had a significant impact on job satisfaction. Moreover, follower`s active engagement showed a significant linear and curvilinear relationship with the outcome variable job satisfaction. On the other hand, Followers independent critical thinking has a non-significant relationship with job satisfaction.

Naiemaha U. et al., (2018) examined the influences of job satisfaction and job performance and followership style among employees from one of the public health institution in Malaysia. This study has utilized the quantitative method (questionnaire). Using simple random sampling method, the question was administered to 230 participants. Participants were medical officers, nurses and administrative staff in public health institution. Results of the research suggest that

job satisfaction is significantly related to followership style; and job performance is not significantly related to followership style.

Gardner L. William et al., (2005) argued that, with today's pressure to promote style over substance, dress for success, embrace flavor-of-the month fads and fashions, and compromise once values to satisfy wall street's unquestionable thirst for quarterly profits, the challenge of knowing, showing, and remaining to real self at work has never been greater. Authors define authentic leaders as individuals who are not only true to themselves, but lead others by helping them to similarly achieve authenticity. Authors believe that through the development of such leaders, as well as authentic followers, positive ethical climate and sustainable follower's accomplishments can be achieved. As per authors, authenticity involves both owning one's personal experiences (values, thoughts, emotions and beliefs) and acting in accordance with one's true self (expressing what you really think and believe and behaving accordingly). Further, authenticity is not an either/or condition which means people are neither completely authentic nor completely inauthentic. Instead, they can best be described as being more or less authentic or inauthentic.

It is observed that for those articles that do exist on followership, most are still centered on leadership whether it be through a follower's perception of leadership, or a leader's perception of followership. The purpose of this study is to add to the body of knowledge regarding followership.

Research Methodology/ Proposed Methodology

To complete the study both primary data and secondary data will be taken. Primary data will be collected from Group A (senior management), Group B (middle management) and Group C(frontline managers) level officers (executives) of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) having designation of Junior Telecom Officer/ Sub Divisional Officer/ Divisional Engineer/ Dy. General Manager/ Junior Account Officer/ Account Officer/ Chief Account Officer/ Executive Engineer from Operations/ Planning/ Project Management/ Sales & Marketing/ Human Resources/ Accounts/ Finance/ Administration departments. Sample size will be of 400 officers, selected from all five business areas of BSNL each consisting of multiple revenue districts in Himachal Pradesh.

Questionnaire will be divided into three sections namely A, B & C to collect different aspects of study like followership style, job satisfaction and employee engagement. Further, to remove the linguistic bias, questionnaires shall be translated in Hindi (local language) in such a way that it retains the letter and spirit of questions. Questionnaires are proposed to be administered bilingually.

Need of Study

Uhl Bein et al., observed that leadership cannot be fully understood without considering the role of followers in the leadership process. After comprehensive review of the research on followership, authors concluded that despite calls in early management and leadership research to focus on followers and followership, t***he study of followership has been mostly missing in leadership literature.*** This is problematic given that followership is expected to play such a crucial part in leadership.

Further, Followers are not a monolithic group. They are individuals with different motivations, values, and abilities. Therefore, ***there is a need to empirically identify the followership styles prevalent in different organizations, cultures and countries***. This research study is an effort towards that direction. It may be noted that, although Kelley and Chaleff are widely referred to in papers concerned with followership, these texts and number of others on the topic is ***criticized because the assumptions are not based on empirical research***. However, some researchers appeared to be answering the call for empirical verification of Kelley's work.

Blanchard et al. for example, published their quantitative study of followership with university employees, claiming that until that point, no research had yet validated followership measures. Thompson and Vecchio have also attempted to verify Kelley's followership typologies with mixed findings. The workplace in the 21stcentury involves more change driven by those in followership roles where in followers have more of a say and role in decision making than ever before[31]. Researchers have reported that organizations which use traditional leadership models in today's sophisticated workplace, typically under perform at best (Bennis & Thomas 2002). Traditional leadership models employ a more top-down tactic where in decisions, actions, and accountability, and responsibilities are handled solely by leaders. (Oslon & Eoyang 2001). This is not conducive to most modern sophisticated workplaces. This has ultimately led organizations to believe that leaders are less effective; however, the underlying issue is the lack of empowerment and engagement (Kelley 1992) among followers and their impact and leaders and organizations success. Moreover, Lundin & Lancaster (1990) found that leadership effectiveness is primarily dependent on the loyalty and knowledge of followers. However just as there are effective and ineffective leaders, there are effective and ineffective followers.

The shift in sophisticated workplaces in 21st century includes shared responsibility among leaders and followers. This affords an opportunity to examine the constructs of followership with the higher level of importance and acceptance from organizations. Historically, followership has been overlooked and dismissed as less important to a group's success in reaching its shared purpose. With the renewed and much more in-depth investigation of followership, organizations now better understand and appreciate the complexity of the leadership between leaders and followers. After all, ***if organizations don't truly understand followership, they really wouldn't fully understand leadership*** (Uhl Bein et al., 2014).

While most organizations continue to overlook the importance of the following role, followers are evolving to define their role as a highly significant and controllable role wherein they are not just complying with roles and expectations, but they are volunteering their allegiance to organizational purpose. This is evident in some followers where in their actions in the workplace far exceed others around

them who share title, responsibilities and expectations. For example, health care worker takes the time to learn about a patient's personal life and family, even though it means workers have to work past their normal work hours. This is not a requirement for the successful handling of the healthcare issue; however, it has a large impact on the healthcare system and the patients involved. Whether the follower is motivated by the success of the organization or by their natural care for patients. What are the factors that lead followers to perform as exemplar in their role and how can we devise organizational development which supports these factors?

Research Issues

The questions are:

- What are the socio-economic conditions in terms of years of experience, age, designation, and educational qualification etc. of executives in BSNL?
- What are the followership styles of executives prevalent in BSNL?
- Is there any relationship between socio-economic conditions and followership styles?
- Is there a significant relationship between followership style and Job Satisfaction among executives in BSNL? Which followership style is more positively correlated with Job Satisfaction? Which are followership styles having no correlation or negative correlation with job Satisfaction?
- Is there a significant relationship between followership style and employee's engagement among executives in BSNL? Which followership style is more positively correlated with employee engagement? Which are followership styles having no correlation or negative correlation with employee engagement?
- What is the relationship between job satisfaction and employee engagement?

Hypotheses

Following hypothesis will be proposed for the study.

H_0: followership style is independent of demographic characteristics (e.g., qualification and years of experience)

H_0: there is significant relationship between exemplary followership style and job satisfaction

H_0: there is significant relationship between exemplary followership style and job engagement.

H_0: there is significant relationship between passive, alienated, conformist and pragmatist followership styles and job satisfaction.

H_0: there is significant relationship between passive, alienated and pragmatist followership styles and job engagement.

Objectives of the Study

In consistence with the research issues/ questions raised above, the study has following specific objectives:

1. To understand the nature and followership styles prevalent in BSNL.
2. To study linkage between socio-economic factors and followership style in public sector setting in emerging economy.
3. To study relationship between followership styles and job satisfaction.
4. To study relationship between followership styles and employee engagement.
5. To understand the followership style this is positively or negatively correlated with job satisfaction and employee engagement.

Significance of Study/ Expected Outcomes of Study

The Main purpose of this quantitative and empirical research study is to explore followership styles prevalent in large public sector Telecommunication Company, having hierarchical organization structure evolved through more than a century, in India. Further this study shall investigate the relationship between different followership styles and job satisfaction and employee engagement. Empirically derived data can be used to reinforce the application of followership styles which are more effective and efficient within the organization. Latour& Rast (2004) suggested that competencies might be developed. These competencies can help and inform followers of those behaviors that best result in job satisfaction and job performance. In my opinion this knowledge of prevalent styles and relationships shall enable the organization to evolve training and development programs for both leaders as well as followers targeted to increase organizational effectiveness and efficiency and better industrial relations.

Organization can also focus on the modification of behavior of followers and leaders in order to enhance job satisfaction and employee engagement. Analyses of

followership styles and their relationship with job satisfaction and job engagement within the organizational setting enable the managers in refining the processes through which they identify individuals who may exhibit higher level of partnership and support staff. This can lead to more effective means of empowerment and organizational collaboration. ***This research study will also address the shortage of empirical evidence associated with followership and study of followership styles prevalent in different organization, cultures and countries***.

Thesis Outline:

Chapter 1: Introduction: This chapter will cover definition of followers and followership, follower's characteristics and styles (typologies)

Chapter 2: Literature Review: This chapter will cover review of relevant journal articles, periodicals and books on followership to identify research gap.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology: This chapter will discuss about various research tools to be deployed to carry out the research work.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation: All the data collected will be interpreted and analyzed in the chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings, Discussion and Conclusion. This chapter will discuss the major findings and suggestions of the study.

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Appendix

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CERTIFICATE
(SYNOPSIS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE)

This is to certify that the Synopsis for Ph.D Thesis titled, *"An Impact Assessment of Followership behaviour on Job Satisfaction &Employee Engagement: A Case Study of Telecommunication Company"* submitted by **Mr. Daya Nand Katyayan** to the **Career Point University, Hamirpur (H.P.),** India in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in MANAGEMENT** in the **Department of Commerce & Management Studies, School of Business and Management Studies** has been approved by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) after an Oral Examination of the student on dated **27/04/2021.**

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